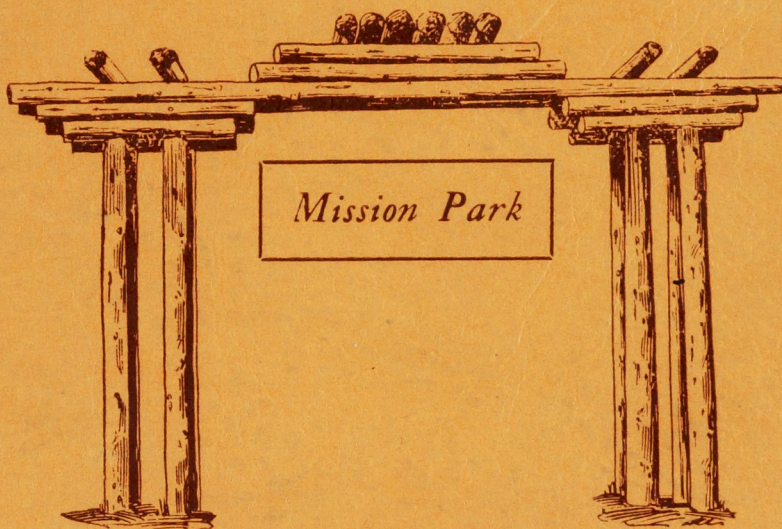


Medora Beckman

# HISTORIC SAINT ALBERT

PROVINCE OF ALBERTA



## Official Guide Book

PRICE: 15 cents





*“Let me review the scene,  
And summon from the shadowy past  
The forms that once have been.”*

—Longfellow.





# DEDICATION

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TO THOSE BRAVE CHAMPIONS  
OF THE CROSS, THE EARLY  
MISSIONARIES, WHO GAVE  
THEIR LIVES TO THE WORK OF  
CIVILIZING AND CHRISTIANIZ-  
ING THE INDIANS AND HALF-  
BREEDS OF WESTERN CANADA,  
THUS MAKING POSSIBLE THE  
GREAT DEVELOPMENT OF  
LATER TIMES, THIS LITTLE  
BOOK IS HUMBLY DEDICATED.

THE EDITOR.







A 15-minute auto drive over a splendid road brings one from the City of Edmonton to Mission Park, St. Albert, truly one of the beauty spots of the province. Here one sees the sparkling Sturgeon river winding its tortuous way through a valley beautiful with many clumps of poplar, willow, and pine. Partially wooded hills rise on all sides, and the landscape panorama, so rich in natural beauty, and so delightfully different from the level prairie stretches, is a refreshing enjoyment to all visitors. The Sturgeon river is crossed at the point where, in 1863, that prince of western missionaries, Father Albert Lacombe, built the first bridge of any size west of the Great Lakes. Memorial Avenue leads up the side of the hill to the site of the mission proper, and was built to commemorate the forty-two men of St. Albert who enlisted with the Mounted Rifles during the rebellion of 1885. This avenue also commemorates the sixteen stalwart men, the flower of the young manhood of this village and district, who gave their lives in freedom's cause during the ghastly struggle of 1914-1918.

The gravel for Memorial Avenue was donated by the Canadian National Railways, and the Alberta Provincial Government supplied a powerful grading machine which made possible rapid and very best construction.

## ***The Father Lacombe Statue***



HE beautiful statue of Reverend Father Albert Lacombe, O.M.I., on the brow of Mission Hill was made in France.

It is of cast iron with a covering of bronze. This statue was brought to Canada in 1929, and unveiled at St. Albert on July 21st of the same year.

The statue stands on the very spot where in 1860 His Lordship Bishop Tache of St. Boniface, and Rev. Father Lacombe stood when the site of the mission was selected. The story of this incident is told by Father Lacombe's biographer, Miss Hughes, as follows: "They surveyed the broad valley, intently refreshing themselves with a choice bit of pemmican as they did so. The Bishop finally turned from his survey and said, 'Mon pere, the site is indeed magnificent. I choose it for the new mission, and I want it to be called St. Albert in honor of your patron.' Then the Bishop planted his staff in the snow where they stood, saying, 'Here you will build the new chapel'."

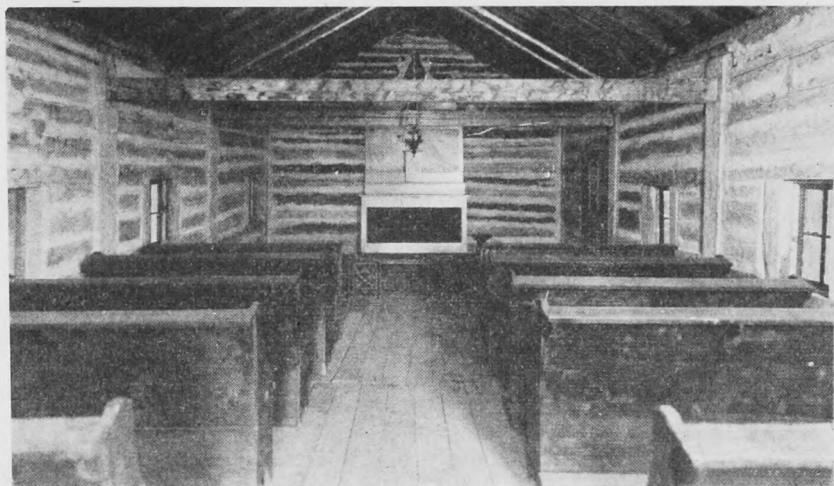
The statue showing Father Lacombe with uplifted cross recalls the heroic act of this brave missionary during a raid on the Blackfeet camp by the Crees in 1870. Father Lacombe was well known and revered by the Crees, but they did not know of their priest friend's presence in the Blackfeet camp on the night of the raid. Had they known, the raid would not have taken place. When the savage yells of the Crees broke the midnight silence of the Blackfeet encampment Father Lacombe donned his soutane, and with uplifted cross faced the raiders in an attempt to make them desist from their mad attack. It was in vain. The night was dark and the tumult was so terrible that it was utterly impossible to do anything to stop the fighting. The struggle lasted until next morning when one of the Blackfeet defenders cried out to the attacking Crees, "You have wounded the priest". Very soon the firing ceased. "We did not know he (Father Lacombe) was in the midst of your camp," said some Cree warriors, "We wish to fight no more." (For a complete account of this attack read Father Jonquet's biography of Bishop Grandin, or Miss Hughes' biography of Father Lacombe.)



## *The Father Lacombe Statue*



## *The Old Cathedral*



The picture above shows the interior of the log church built by Father Albert Lacombe in 1862, following Bishop Tache's pastoral visit the year previous. In 1865 this church of humble proportions and construction was dedicated by Bishop Grandin as the first cathedral of the See of St. Albert.



Above is shown the brick structure which now encases the old cathedral building. In the year 1927 Rev. Father Jan, O.M.I., the pastor at St. Albert, seeing how the old buildings were fast falling into ruin, determined to save at least the historic old cathedral. A successful appeal was made for funds and construction of the brick encasement was begun and completed in 1929. The building is now used as the mission museum, and will be found highly interesting by visitors.



## ***Phenomenal Progress***



ISHOP TACHE returned to the new mission of St. Albert on the 3rd day of Dec., 1864. What a joy it must have been to His Lordship to see the amazing progress which had been made. The humble church building, later to serve as cathedral, was completed. The priests' residence, a substantial building 30 by 24 feet, was in readiness for the pastoral visit. Another building, 50 by 40 feet and two storeys in height, met the admiring gaze of Bishop Tache. "Sunrise", His Lordship wrote, "permitted us to contemplate with pardonable pride and complacency the beautiful mission of St. Albert, so advanced and yet so new. The beauty of the site, enhanced by art, amazed us, although we had chosen the spot ourselves only four years ago. And yet what a great work had already been done! Handsome and vast constructions had been erected as if by enchantment; broad meadows had been cleared, well fenced around and put under cultivation, and were already yielding abundant harvests. The whole scene enraptured our gaze. The houses built around this pretty mount; that of the Lord and those of His devoted ministers and His most devoted handmaids forming a group, dominating the whole country-side. The little river winding around the base of the hills and crossed by a fine bridge; then, at a little distance the lake, whose waters lave the hill-sides which furnished the timber for the buildings! All this we could not leave without admiration."

In 1865 Father Lacombe founded the mission of St. Paul des Cris. He was replaced at St. Albert by Fathers Tissot and Andre. Rev. Father H. Leduc took sole charge of the mission in the spring of 1868. Very soon afterwards word was received by Father Leduc from Bishop Grandin, who was visiting in France, that the episcopal residence would be permanently fixed at St. Albert. "I shall come to you," said the Bishop, "with a regular caravan of missionaries, priests, ecclesiastical students and some pious young men who wish to devote themselves to the missions. Get to work, then! Use every effort to procure us the provision and lodging arrangements that are absolutely necessary"

## ***A Beautiful Parish Church***



**S**T. ALBERT boasts one of the finest and largest churches in Western Canada. For a number of years the basement of the present structure was the Cathedral for the See of St. Albert. It was originally intended that this building be completed and continue as the episcopal church. In 1912, however, the See was transferred to Edmonton and the St. Albert church was not completed until 1922.

A visit to this church is well worth while. One finds here an atmosphere of quiet which lends itself to prayer and devotion. The little light beaming from the sanctuary lamp tells of the presence in the Tabernacle of our Eucharistic Lord. We look again at the sanctuary lamp when we are told that it is the same that hung before the altar at Paray-le-Monial, France, when Our Blessed Lord appeared there to St. Margaret Mary. On the walls there are beautiful paintings of the Way of the Cross. On the altar are seen six candlesticks and a large crucifix, the gift of Napoleon III to His Lordship Bishop Grandin. Visitors should take note of the pulpit, which was carved out of native wood by Van Tighen, an Oblate lay brother.

A picture of this church is shown on page 11.

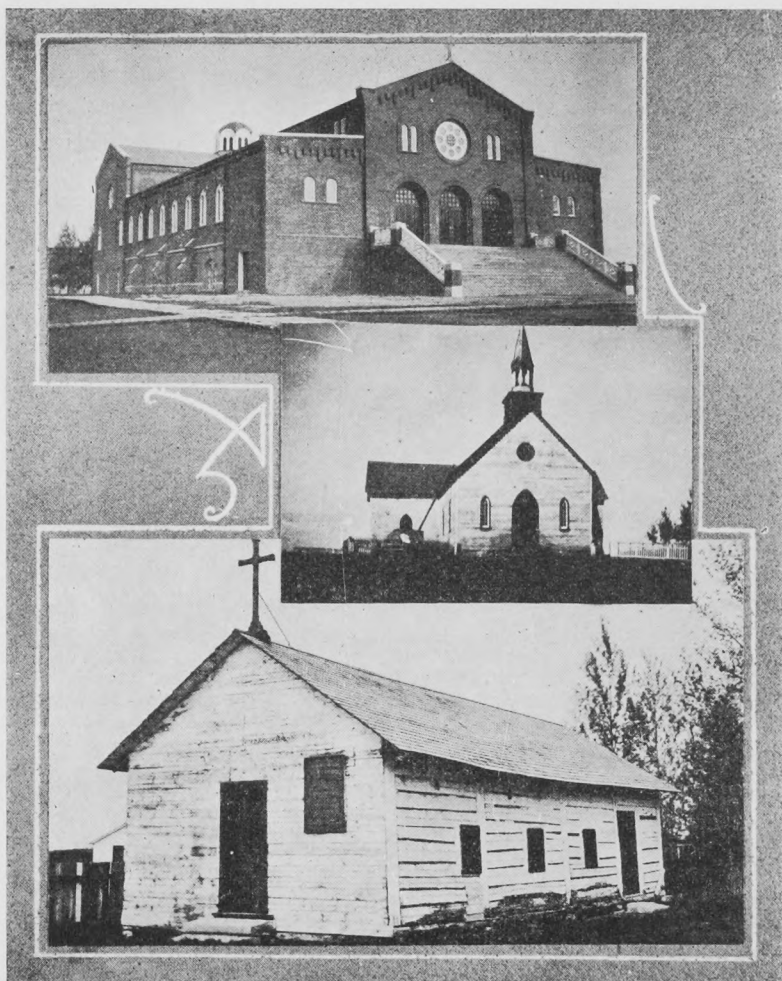
## ***The Mission House***



**T**HE present glebe house or priests' residence was for a number of years up to 1912 the Bishop's palace. One meets under its roof, even today, a number of that noble band of missionary fathers who built it. A visit inside is well worth while. Every panel in the walls and floors was hewn and sawn by the pioneer builders. In the chapel everything from the holy water font at the door to the flying angels high over the altar is the work of skilful and patient hands. The altar deserves special attention. It is another carving masterpiece, the work of Brother Brochart.



## ***Growth and Progress of Father Lacombe's Religious Work at St. Albert***



BOTTOM—The oldest existing church in Western Canada, built in 1861.

CENTRE—Second church built in 1870, and destroyed by fire in 1917.

TOP—Present church completed in 1922.

NOTE—The churches of 1861 and 1870 were built by the Missionaries, the logs and shingles being cut and finished by hand.

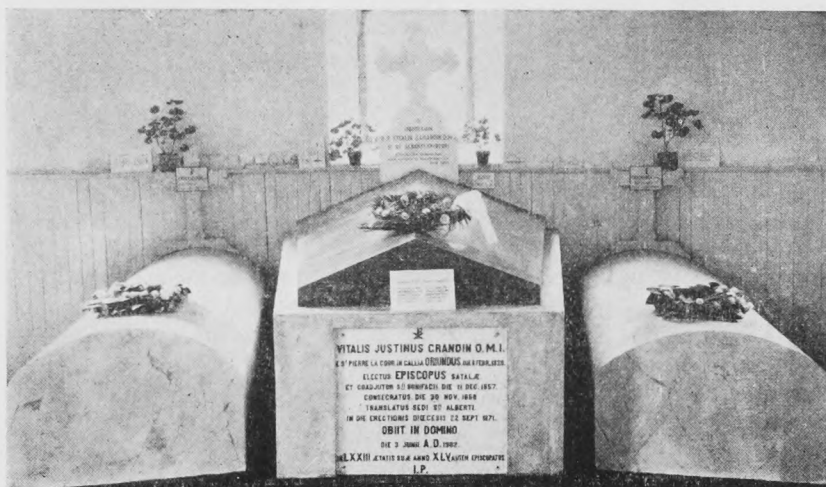
## The Crypt

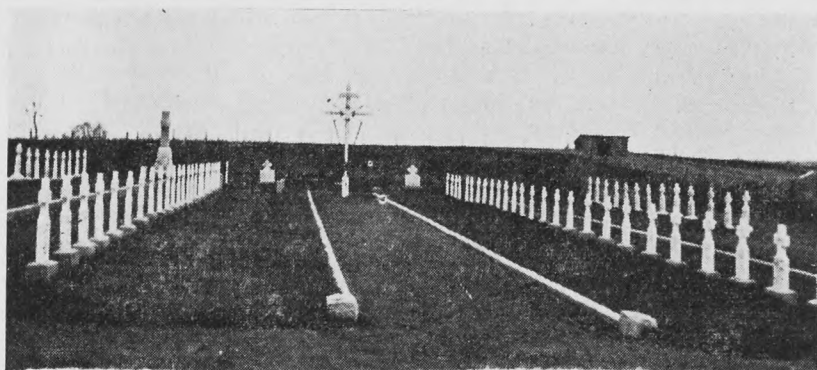
(Chapel of St. Teresa—Tombs)



In the crypt, under the sanctuary, is the chapel of St. Teresa of the Child Jesus. The handsome altar was built by Rev. Father Blanchet in 1870. On either side of the altar are statues, the adoring angels, carved in wood by Rev. Brother Brochart. In 1884 these statues were given to Bishop Grandin as a jubilee gift. For a year and a half Brother Brochart toiled to bring to completion this masterpiece of the carving art. One sees on the altar a relic of St. Teresa (The Little Flower), which was sent to St. Albert mission by the Saint's sister, who is now a Carmelite nun at Lisieux.

Here, too, are the tombs of Bishop Grandin, Father Lacombe, and Father Leduc. Visitor, kneel in silent homage at the last resting-place of these brave soldiers of Christ, and thank Almighty God for what they were able, under Him, to accomplish in the great cause of the kingdom of God and civilization.





### **St. Albert Mission Cemetery**

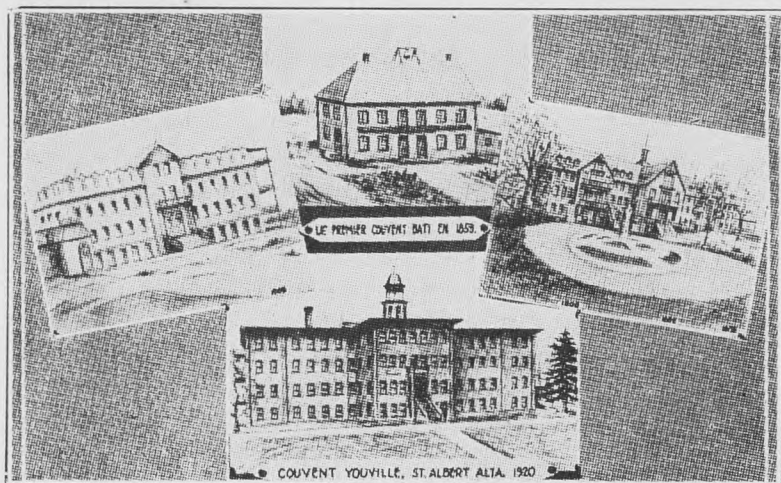
**H**ERE lie buried side by side the fellow laborers of Bishop Grandin, of Father Lacombe, and Father Leduc—all brave men and women who sleep in honored repose in the missionary land of their adoption. The Grey Nuns of Montreal have a plot reserved and four lines of marble crosses mark the last resting places of many missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate who, in the difficult pioneer days, labored with truly apostolic zeal to promote the glory of God in the salvation of souls.

Surmounted by a tall cross, there is seen the grave of the late Archbishop Legal, the second bishop of St. Albert and the first Metropolitan at Edmonton. Glance at these crosses and see the names of men whose memory will ever be enshrined in the early history of the Canadian West. What a glorious "roll of honor"! Father Van Tighen, pioneer missionary and founder of the missions at Macleod and Lethbridge; Father Nordmann, first German missionary to Western Canada and founder of the mission at Leduc; Father Moulin, heroic missionary, severely wounded at Batoche in the rebellion of 1885; Father Lestanc, whose influence with Riel prevented the killing of many in the rebellion; Father Andre, who assisted Louis Riel on the scaffold; Fathers Marchand and Fafard, missionaries murdered by the Indians of the Big Bear tribe on Holy Thursday, April 2nd, 1885; the beloved Father Merer; Fathers Cunningham and Chevigny, both natives of St. Albert; Brother Avrillon, the first miller of the West; Brother Ryan, a kindly schoolmaster; Brother Bowes, pioneer builder of churches and mission houses in many parts of the West; Brother Leriche, a renowned acrobat and prize-fighter of Paris, who joined Bishop Grandin's band of mission-



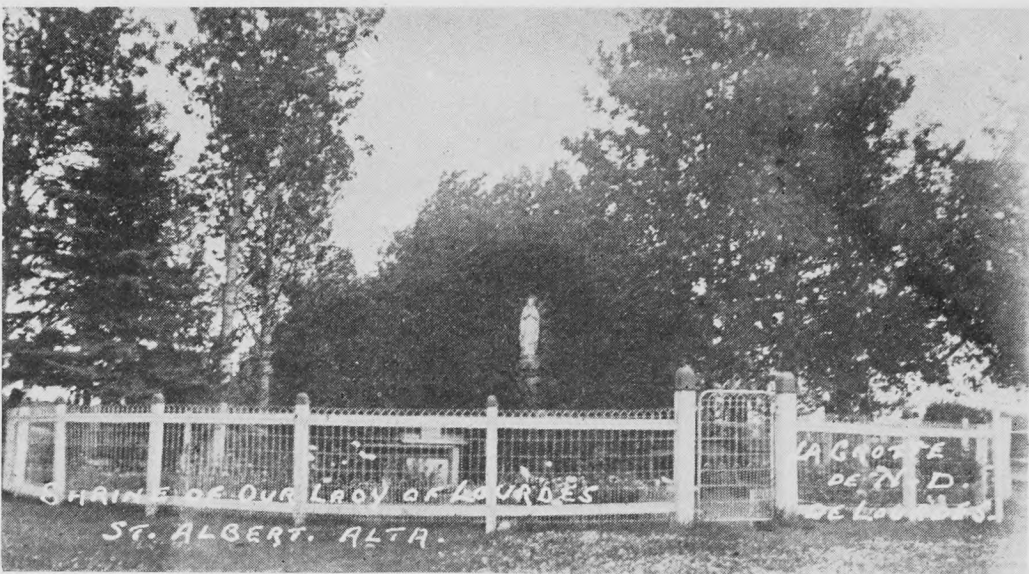
aries and became one of the first, if not the first blacksmith in present-day Alberta; Brother Alexis, murdered on the banks of the Athabasca in 1875 when he attempted to defend an orphan girl from a perfidious Indian guide; and many more whose names and fame are a cherished heritage.

Alberta will do well to incorporate into the pages of her history the heroic story of these missionaries. They were associated not only with the early development of the Church but with every phase of progress and development in the West, with charity, education, agriculture and immigration, with the building of the first railroads, schools, orphanages, hospitals and mills.



## ***Youville Convent***

**T**HE large building in the shape of a cross, at the western end of the mission enclosure is **YOUVILLE CONVENT** comprising the Convent proper, the Novitiate, a HOME for the Aged—ladies and men—, an Indian Residential School. Volumes could be written about the good Sisters of Charity since the day when Father Lacombe built their first log-cabin in 1863. To-day they possess a fully modern building housing about three-hundred persons. All pupils in attendance follow the Course of Studies authorized by the Department of Indian Affairs. The time-table includes periods for the teaching of cooking, sewing and needle-work. Boys are also taught manual work according to their abilities.



### *The Grotto of Lourdes*

**H**ALF WAY between the church and the cemetery, not far from the entrance to the memorial chapel, the visitor finds to-day a beautiful replica of the Grotto of Lourdes; an outside shrine covered with vines in the summer, and housing in its excavation a statue of Our Lady, such as she appeared to Bernadette in Lourdes in 1858.

Pilgrims like to come and pray at the shrine.

The first pilgrimage was inaugurated in 1938, and since then, each year, on the Sunday after the Assumption, a local pilgrimage brings at the feet of Our Lady several thousand worshippers.









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